

FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICY ACT GUIDELINES

For Local Public Agency (LPA) Federal-Aid Projects

Introduction

LPA federal-aid projects that require acquisition of right-of-way must comply with the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). The purpose of the FPPA is to “minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses, and to assure that Federal programs are administered in a manner that, to the extent practicable, will be compatible with State, unit of local government, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.” (7 U.S.C. 4201(b)).

Applicability

The FPPA governs impacts to farmland only. Farmland, according to the FPPA, is defined as prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland that is of state or local importance. These terms are further defined in 7 U.S.C. 4201(c)(1) and 7 CFR 658.2(a).

Land that is already in or committed to urban development or water storage does not qualify as farmland and is therefore not subject to the FPPA. As per 7 CFR 658.2(a), land that meets any one the following criteria is considered already committed to urban development or water storage:

1. Land with a density of 30 structures or more per 40 acre area.
2. Land identified as an “urbanized area” (UA) on the Census Bureau Map.
3. Land mapped as an urban area using the tint-overprint on the USGS topographical maps.
4. Land shown as “urban-built-up” on the USDA Important Farmland Maps.
5. Land that receives a combined score of 160 points or less for the Land Evaluation (Part V) and Site Assessment (Part VI) criteria on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form.

Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form

The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form ([Form AD-1006](#)) has been developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), to aid local, state, and federal agencies in documenting impacts to farmland. In an effort to reduce unnecessary paper work, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), the NRCS and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have developed the following thresholds to determine if this form must be submitted:

1. If the project requires five acres or less of new right-of-way per mile or per site, the project does not present a significant impact to farmland and submittal of Form AD-1006 is not required.
2. If the project requires more than five acres of new right of way per mile or per site, Form AD-1006 must be completed by the LPA or their consultant. Refer to [Chart 6E – Farmland Policy Protection Act Process](#), located in the Flow Charts section, for more information about the submittal and processing of Form AD-1006.

Supplemental Instructions for Completing Form AD-1006

Instructions for completing Form AD-1006 are included with the form. However, to provide local agencies with additional guidance in scoring the site assessment criteria (Part VI of the form), the following instructions have been developed. These instructions summarize those listed in [7 CFR 658.5\(b\)](#), and in addition, give interpolated point values for the ranges of percentages listed. Use the point values shown in the tables below (or a linear interpolation between these values) when determining the Part VI score for each of the site assessment criteria. Instructions for each of the twelve site criteria are listed below.

1. Area in Nonurban Use: According to the following table, assign a point value for the percentage of land in nonurban use within a radius of one (1) mile of the project:

Percentage	> 90	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	< 20
Point Value	15	14	12	11	9	7	5	2	1	0

2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use: According to the following table, assign a point value for the percentage of the project site perimeter that borders land in nonurban use.

Percentage	> 90	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	< 20
Point Value	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	1	0

3. Percent of Site Being Farmed: According to the following table, assign a point value for the percentage of project site that has been farmed (managed for a scheduled harvest or timber activity) for more than five (5) of the last ten (10) years.

Percentage	> 90	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	< 20
Point Value	20	19	16	14	11	9	6	4	1	0

4. Protection Provided by State and Local Government: If the site is subject to state, local government or private programs or policies to protect farmland, assign twenty (20) points. If not, assign zero (0) points.
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area: This criteria does not apply for street and highway projects. Assign zero (0) points.
6. Distance to Urban Support Services: This criteria does not apply for street and highway projects. Assign zero (0) points.
7. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared to Average: According to the following table, assign a point value for the average size of the farm unit(s) containing the site (before the project) as compared with the average size farm unit in that county.

Percentage	>=100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50
Point Value	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Note: The percentage above is calculated by dividing the average site farm unit(s) size by the average farm unit size in that county. Average farm sizes in each county are available from the NRCS field office.

8. Creation of Nonfarmable Farmland: According to the following table, assign a point value for the percentage of remaining farmland that will be nonfarmable if the project site is chosen.

Percentage	>25	25	20	15	10	5	<5
Point Value	25	24	18.25	12.5	6.75	1	0

Note: The percentage above is calculated by dividing the amount of remaining farmland that is nonfarmable by amount of farmland that is converted by the project. For example: If, as a result of the project, 1 acre of farmland is left nonfarmable and 5 acres are converted, the percentage is 20 % and 18.25 points are assigned.

9. Availability of Farm Support Services: Assign a point value for the availability and adequate supply of farm support services, such as farm suppliers, equipment dealers, processing and storage facilities and farmer's markets. Use the following scale:

All required services are available = five (5) points
 Some required services are available = four (4) to one (1) points
 No required services are available = zero (0) points.

10. On-Farm Investments: Assign a point value according to the amount of substantial and well-maintained on-farm investments on the project site such as barns, other storage buildings, fruit trees and vines, field terraces, drainage, irrigation, waterways or other soil and water conservation measures. Count only the on-farm investments that are actually on the project site. Use the following scale:

High amount of on-farm investments = twenty (20) points
 Moderate amount of on-farm investments = nineteen (19) to one (1) points
 No on-farm investments = zero (0) points.

11. Effects of Conversion on Farm Support Services: Assign a point value according to the reduction in demand for farm support services that the project would create by converting farmland to nonagricultural use. Use the following scale:

Substantial reduction = twenty-five (25) points
 Some reduction = twenty-four (24) to one (1) points
 No significant reduction = zero (0) points.

12. Compatibility with Existing Agricultural Use: Assign a point value according to the degree to which the proposed use of the project site is sufficiently incompatible with agriculture that it will likely contribute to the eventual conversion of surrounding farmland to nonagricultural use. Use the following scale:

Incompatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland = ten (10) points
 Tolerable to existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland = nine (9) to one (1) points
 Fully compatible with existing agricultural use of surrounding farmland = zero (0) points